

Prestige



Provenance



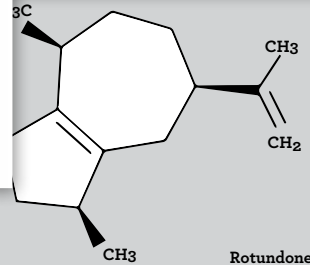
Purity



Experiences



Heritage



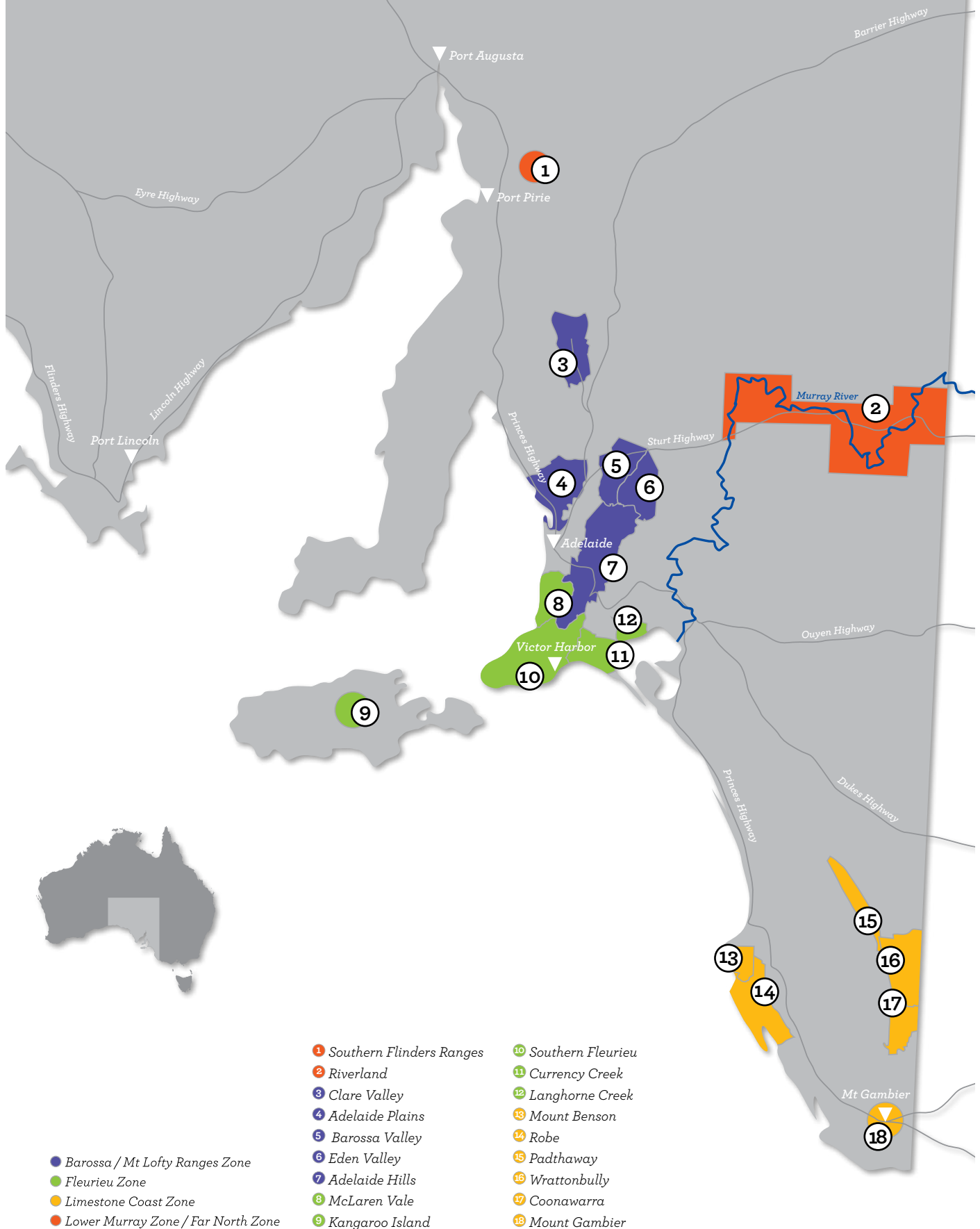
Innovation

Personality

The South Australian Wine Story



South Australia's wine regions



Note some regions are not portrayed to actual geographical size, but in terms of their volume of production.

South Australia

Wine's natural home



Adelaide is Australia's wine capital and the industry's heart and soul can be found in South Australia's 18 unique and distinctive regions.

This is where it all comes together: a proud history enhanced by future thinking; prestigious wines with style and personality created from old vines and modern techniques; a commitment to sustainability and purity; and some truly memorable tourism experiences.

And then there are the names. Penfold's Grange, the Barossa Valley, Peter Lehmann and Wolf Blass – the list goes on. These special wines, signature sites and larger than life characters are synonymous with a vibrant industry that continues to make the world take notice.

Our wine history may be short by Old World standards, but it is incredibly rich. And the reason for our success and status is quite simple.

Wine is central to South Australia's being and dominates our thinking as clearly as vineyards enhance our landscape. It is at once a way of life, an economic driver and a source of immense pride.

We are blessed with a diversity of soils and climates that provide a perfect platform for excellence and innovation. But it takes passion and skill to bring potential to reality and to do it with style. That is the real South Australian story.

The following pages provide a brief snapshot of why any Australian wine journey must begin in South Australia. You could be here quite a while!

Heritage *History, experience and leadership* Page 02

Provenance *Distinctive styles from special places* Page 03

Prestige *Australia's very best wines* Page 05

Personality
Authentic people with vision and passion Page 06

Purity *Natural and sustainable wine* Page 08

Innovation *Shaping the future* Page 10

Experiences
Welcoming visitors with wine and more Page 11

Barossa / Mt Lofty Ranges Zone
*Barossa Valley / Eden Valley / Clare Valley /
Adelaide Hills / Adelaide Plains* Page 12

Fleurieu Zone
*McLaren Vale / Langhorne Creek / Currency Creek /
Southern Fleurieu / Kangaroo Island* Page 15

Limestone Coast Zone
*Coonawarra / Padthaway / Wrattenbully /
Mt Benson / Robe / Mt Gambier* Page 18

Lower Murray Zone / Far North Zone
Riverland / Southern Flinders Ranges Page 21

Heritage

History, experience and leadership



South Australia's prestigious place in the wine world was born of equal parts vision, planning and hard work. And it all happened quickly.

Barely three years after the original Colony was founded in 1836, a German settler saw the immense potential of the area north of Adelaide we now know as the Barossa Valley, noting a resemblance to France's famous Rhone Valley.

Just a handful of years later, vineyards were flourishing in the Barossa, McLaren Vale to the south and the nearby Adelaide Hills (three of modern South Australia's pre-eminent wine regions) and our pioneering winemakers were beginning to make their mark.



This was always their intention. South Australian settlers did not just throw vines into the ground to see what might happen. There was a clear commitment to develop a world-class wine industry that would both use, and do justice to, what nature was providing.

South Australian settlers did not just throw vines into the ground to see what might happen.

It is significant that eight of the 13 oldest wine companies or continuously operating brands in Australia are South Australian.

Established between 1841 and 1853 they include household names Penfold's, Orlando, Seppeltsfield and Yalumba, alongside Bleasdale, Normans, Sevenhill Cellars and Oliver's Taranga. The likes of Saltram and Hardys Tintara were soon to follow.

Yalumba is of particular note because it is the nation's oldest family-owned winery and a founding member of Australia's First Families of Wine (AFFW), a unique collaboration of

companies with custodianship of some of our finest vineyards. Four other South Australian wineries are members – Taylors, d'Arenberg, Henschke and Jim Barry Wines.

As South Australia's wineries grew and developed in the early years, they were greatly assisted by something that didn't happen – Phylloxera, the tiny but deadly insect that can permanently sap the health and vigour of even the strongest vines.

Strict quarantine measures and good vineyard management ensured the Phylloxera outbreak that ravaged Australia's eastern states in the late 1800s – and has been equally destructive before and since in Europe and other wine-producing countries – simply didn't make it to South Australia. Just to be sure, a formal Phylloxera Act was passed in 1899 – an early sign of the Government's commitment to supporting the wine industry.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. It means that South Australia boasts some of the oldest established vineyards anywhere in the world.

Henschke's iconic Hill of Grace Shiraz, for example, is produced each year from vines that originate from material brought from Europe in the 1860s. This single vineyard Shiraz has been acclaimed, and much in demand, since the first bottling in 1958.

Similarly, the enduring quality of Pewsey Vale's famous Riesling owes much to vines whose ancestry can be traced back to the first stocks to be brought to Australia. There is no greater proof that great wine begins with great vineyards. They are priceless assets.

Knowledge is important too, and in 1936 Roseworthy Agriculture College, the first institution of its kind in Australia, began teaching the nation's first Diploma of Oenology. Roseworthy now claims some of the world's great winemakers among its graduates.



This unique heritage positioned South Australia to guide and inspire the growth of a mature and sophisticated wine industry into the second half of the 20th century.

As high-quality wines emerged to establish the reputation of regions like the Clare Valley and the world-renowned Coonawarra, a hub of industry leadership was developing in South Australia, creating what can only be described as Australia's "Wine HQ".

The Australian Grape and Wine Authority – the Government body that regulates and promotes Australia's wine and sets the industry's research priorities – is based in Adelaide, as are the organisations that represent the nation's winemakers and grape growers, and a critical mass of both research power and whole-of-wine supply chain wine education, encompassing viticulture, oenology, wine marketing and wine business.

Wine's future thinking begins in South Australia, and there are significant rewards.

Wine contributes more than \$2 billion to the South Australian economy, second only to mining. South Australian wine is exported to more than 100 countries.

Provenance

Distinctive styles from special places

Few wine regions anywhere in the world capture the meaning and spirit of "terroir" quite like the Coonawarra.

The focal point is the famous "terra rossa": a cigar-shaped band of rich soil just two kilometres wide and barely 20 long that is so distinctively red it is clearly visible from the air. But there are other factors at play as well.

The shallow underlying limestone ridge, pure underground water and a maritime climate that produces long cool ripening seasons all help create unique and distinctive conditions that have made the name Coonawarra synonymous with truly great Cabernet Sauvignon.

As James Halliday, Australia's most influential wine writer, notes in his definitive *Australian Wine Companion*, "in South Australia, Coonawarra stands supreme, its climate ... strikingly similar to that of Bordeaux". The result is "perfectly detailed Cabernets".

The maritime influence is even more pronounced, though less uniform, in the McLaren Vale, where the sweeping vistas take in a mix of rolling vineyards and rugged coastal scenery.

This is one of Australia's most picturesque and environmentally conscious wine regions, as well as one of the most geologically diverse in the world. Significant differences in soil, topography and weather conditions exist in very close proximity, creating an exciting range of options for wineries with vision.

The Mediterranean climate has helped winemakers successfully embrace Spanish and Italian varieties such as Barbera, Fiano, Tempranillo, and Mourvèdre, but Shiraz remains McLaren Vale's standard-bearer. James Halliday calls it one of the "ancestral homes" of Shiraz in Australia. The Barossa Valley and Clare Valley are among the others.

The Clare Valley is actually even better known as prime Riesling country. This inland region at the base of the Mt Lofty Ranges endures warm to hot summers, but cooling afternoon breezes help slow the ripening process. This allows for elegant, finely structured Rieslings that are respected worldwide.

James Halliday notes that for well over 100 years the Clare Valley and nearby Eden Valley "stood above all others" in Australia for premium Riesling. They remain the benchmark.





The Eden Valley is sometimes referred to as the “cool climate Barossa”, and its greater altitude allows winemakers to produce premium white wines (Chardonnay as well as Riesling) alongside the Shiraz that is the hallmark of its immediate and otherwise similar neighbour.

The Barossa, of course, is Australia’s best-known wine region and Shiraz grown from some of the oldest vines in the world is its star performer (alongside some exciting Grenache, Mourvèdre and Semillon). The growing conditions are also conducive to fortified wines, including Seppeltsfield’s legendary 100-Year-Old Para Vintage Tawny.

South Australia’s true cool climate region is the Adelaide Hills, just 20 minutes from the CBD, where vines

were planted as early as 1839. This is one of the very few regions in Australia to produce truly great Sauvignon Blanc – wines with structure and authority that can only be created in the right conditions by winemakers with a real feel for the variety.

The four Australian regions producing the highest percentage of the very best grapes are all from South Australia.

In recent years, the Adelaide Hills has also become known for Pinot Gris and Semillon: more structured and weighty than the classic Hunter Valley Semillon, but every bit as sophisticated.

The quiet achiever is Langhorne Creek, rated by many good judges as among the best regions in Australia for Cabernet Sauvignon. After all, it’s where Wolf Blass sourced the grapes that helped him win Australia’s highest profile wine award, the Jimmy Watson Trophy, an unprecedented three years in a row.

The underlying theme here is quality fruit. The four Australian regions producing the highest percentage of the very best grapes are all from South Australia. The Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Coonawarra and the Adelaide Hills between them have a 55% share.

Not surprisingly, this is mirrored in export figures. South Australia accounts for 20-30% of Australia’s export sales at lower to middle price points, but more than 60% at the higher price points.

Prestige

Australia's very best wines



Peter Gago.

Penfold's Grange has become a global phenomenon. Headlines are generated weeks before the May release of each new vintage, and chief winemaker Peter Gago is as likely to be at a launch event in New York, London or Hong Kong as in Adelaide.

When he is in town, however, the long queue waiting before dawn at the picturesque Magill Estate Winery for the traditional 7.30 am first tasting – and first chance to purchase – highlights his, and the wine's, status.

Yet while Grange is unquestionably magnificent (Robert Parker Jr awarded the 2008 vintage a maximum 100 points) it is very much just the icing on a spectacularly good cake.

In the Langton's Classification of Australian Wine released in May 2014, 13 of the 21 wines rated as "exceptional" – the very best in Australia – are from South Australia. So too are more than half of those in the "outstanding" category. In all, 79 South Australian wines are listed, significantly more than from all the other states combined.

Thirty come from Barossa/Eden Valley alone. They include the Rockford Black Shiraz; one of 12 new wines added from South Australia in 2014, and the first ever sparkling wine to be listed. The judges suggest it is the best example of a "distinctive, historic and uniquely Australian wine style".

The Langton's classification is considered the authoritative guide to Australia's premium wines and one of the most comprehensive outside Europe. Updated every five years, it measures excellence over a sustained period of at least 10 vintages.

The South Australian dozen listed as exceptional alongside Grange include another Penfold's gem, the Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, and two from the historic Henschke vineyards of Eden Valley – the Hill of Grace Vineyard Shiraz (considered by some judges to be the best of the best) and the Mount Edelstone Shiraz.

Four Barossa wines are in the top category – three classic Shiraz alongside the iconic Seppeltsfield 100-Year-Old Para Vintage Tawny – and three from the Clare Valley. Some of the great names

of Australian wine are represented, from Torbreck and Rockford to Grosset, Jim Barry and Wynns Coonawarra Estate.

Not surprisingly, these same wineries achieve five star ratings in James Halliday's annual listing of wineries with a track record of sustained excellence, alongside other exceptional South Australian wineries such as Petaluma, Peter Lehmann, Shaw + Smith, Grant Burge, Wirra Wirra, Wolf Blass and Yalumba.

South Australia's reputation for crafting prestigious wines of distinction is also reflected in a constant stream of national and international honours, for both our established champions and a new generation of world-beaters.

You need look no further than 2013 International Wine & Spirit Competition for proof.

Wolf Blass Wines rightly grabbed the headlines after winning three trophies and being named International Winemaker of the Year for a third time. However, the judges were also excited by two boutique South Australian wineries, presenting two medals each to the Barossa's Bethany Wines and Henry's Drive from the Padthaway region near Coonawarra (noting that Padthaway is a region to be reckoned with for Shiraz).

South Australian wineries have also dominated the Jimmy Watson Trophy, winning 75% of the trophies awarded since 1962.



Personality

Authentic people with belief and passion

With South Australia making so many of Australia's truly great wines, it is hardly surprising that we also dominate the list of people who have shaped and led the industry.

Eight of the 13 individuals to receive the Maurice O'Shea Award – recognised as the highest honour the industry can confer on one of its members – have come from South Australia.

Their names are synonymous with Australia's success: Max Schubert, David Wynn, Brian Croser, Dr Bryce Rankin, Wolf Blass, Guenter Prass, Dr Ray Beckwith and Philip Laffer.

While their individual personalities are as disparate as the wines they helped create, they share a bond as visionaries and innovators with a passion for the industry. Schubert and Blass are a case in point.

Schubert, the man behind Grange, was quiet, unassuming, and happy to let his wine talk for him, while Blass is a true showman, his trademark bowtie recognisable around the world. Their joint legacy is a commitment to blending and to sourcing grapes from a variety of regions that helped create some of Australia's great red wines.

Schubert, who the international Decanter magazine named “man of the year” in 1988, worked hand in hand with Beckwith, whose pioneering research on stabilising wine and protecting it from spoilage revolutionised winemaking practices around the world and laid the foundations for Australia's modern industry. It was one of the industry's greatest ever partnerships.

Wynn was renowned as an unorthodox thinker, as well as a great winemaker. He defied conventional wisdom to stake his future on a belief in the potential of the Coonawarra, and generations of Cabernet Sauvignon lovers have been the beneficiaries.

Croser, who was Decanter's “man of the year” in 2004, has been one of Australian wine's great innovators for more than 40 years, and a champion of its premium wines. The founder of Petaluma in the Adelaide Hills and more recently Tapanappa Wines (in which Bollinger is a shareholder), he was one of the first in Australia to suit grape varieties to regions and is considered a mentor by many of our current leading winemakers.

Of course, the list of South Australia's leaders is not confined to those who have been honoured with the Maurice O'Shea.

Peter Lehmann, the undisputed “Baron of the Barossa” rivalled Blass as the public face of Australian wine, and when he passed away in July 2013 a nation mourned.

A great winemaker and a great man, he was a larger than life character with personality and passion and it seemed that every man and woman in the street knew who he was and what he stood for. Newspapers wrote editorials, and hundreds of people came from far and wide to toast his memory and share stories in the grounds of his winery.

Francis d'Arenberg Osborn (better known to all in the industry as d'Arry) holds a similarly legendary status in the McLaren Vale, where he has overseen in excess of 70 vintages, more than half in partnership with his flamboyant son Chester, who is recognised around the world for both his winemaking skills and his taste in colourful shirts.



Max Schubert.



Brian Croser.



Wolf Blass.



Four generations of Hoffmanns in the Barossa Valley.

Perhaps South Australia's most dynamic wine "couple", however, is winemaker Stephen Henschke and his viticulturist wife Prue, who simultaneously enhance the legend that is Hill of Grace while continuing to innovate and push the boundaries in a vineyard that is now fully organic.

Importantly, an exciting new generation of leaders is coming through. Take Ben Glaetzer for example; a year after he was named Australia's Young Winemaker of the Year, no less a judge than Robert Parker Jr called him as "serious talent" and chose him as Wine Personality of the Year.

Or there's Yalumba's Louisa Rose, who was Gourmet Traveller Wine magazine's Winemaker of the Year in 2008. A leading wine writer was moved to suggest that "whatever the next big thing turns out to be, Louisa Rose will probably be the one who makes it".

"Outsiders" are still inspired to make their mark in South Australia as well. Jacques Lurton, a leading winemaker from one of the most celebrated winemaking families in Bordeaux, discovered a unique sense of place on Kangaroo Island and has built The Islander into one of the most respected wine labels in Australia.



Peter Lehmann (right) in familiar pose.

Purity

Natural and sustainable wine

Wine is first and foremost a natural product, and South Australian winemakers take great care of their environment. They see themselves as guardians of the ancient soils, fresh air and clean but scarce water resources that underpin their craft.

In recent years there has been a move towards establishing formal protocols, developing environmental management systems and setting standards for all the industry to meet, and here again South Australia has been a leader.

In 2003 the South Australian Wine Industry Association (SAWIA) consolidated a decade of thinking to create Sustaining Success, a toolkit that set guidelines for wineries and wine regions to follow in establishing best-practice guidelines that would ensure that South Australia was a global leader in wine industry sustainability.

The aim was to make change based on knowledge, and the response and the

results have been impressive. The use of irrigation in South Australian vineyards is 14% lower than the national average, for example, and our wineries have received significantly more than their share of government funding for clean technology programs.

Sustaining Success was the precursor to the development of the Entwine Australia program launched by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia in 2008. This provides a mechanism for winemakers and grape growers to receive formal certification of their practices according to recognised international standards. Two-thirds of Entwine members are from South Australia.

In addition, some wine regions have complementary local environmental programs, with the McLaren Vale in particular considered a leader in this regard. Just two years after it launched a comprehensive sustainable winegrowing program, 40% of its vineyard area had signed on.

McLaren Vale has also launched a code of conduct to ensure its vineyards remain free of Phylloxera and, after decades of diligent research, released what it believes is a world first – a detailed map of the region's diverse geology, which provides a key to the complex, constantly unfolding links between the land and modern wine flavours.

South Australia's wide range of climates also provides important benefits for wineries and ultimately consumers. Less disease pressure in the vineyards allows for lower chemical use.

In addition, many companies are embracing solar energy. Jacob's Creek made a significant statement in 2010 when it installed two large solar tracking panels at its Visitors Centre in the Barossa Valley, for example, while at the end of 2013 d'Arenberg invested in the largest winery solar PV generator in South Australia at its McLaren Vale winery.



Some activities are gaining international attention. Banrock Station has been a leader in promoting environmental protection and restoration for close to two decades, and in 2001 the giant wetland area that is a focal part of its winery was formally rated as of international importance under a global treaty known as the Ramsar Convention.

In 2013 Yalumba won the International Award of Excellence in Sustainable Winegrowing Competition run by the Botanical Institute of Texas – the only one of its kind in the world. The award acknowledged the success of a program developed over three decades that runs through the entire business from grape growing to wine production to the consumer.

Taylor's Wine has an equally impressive track record and its Eighty Acres range of wines was the first in the world to have its full carbon footprint assessed to international standard so the company could then offset its CO₂ output using legitimate, high quality carbon offsets.

The use of irrigation in South Australian vineyards is 14% lower than the national average.

Taylor's' comprehensive environmental management system allows it to audit the impact of its activities across a number of key measures, including water consumption, waste, noise and air emissions, energy, soil and storage managements and environmental risks.

SAWIA continues to provide a focus for the industry's determination to constantly improve its environmental performance – making change based on knowledge – particularly in relation to climate change. This has included developing a Climate Change Adaption Toolkit for the industry and, on the

industry's behalf, signing a formal Climate Change Sector Agreement with the South Australian Government.

There is also a strong focus on environmental research. The AWRI, for example, is investigating the use of grape marc as a fuel source for low-emissions renewable power generation, and working with partners in the Adelaide-based Wine Innovation Cluster to develop innovative methods for improving the management of valuable soil and water resources.

For consumers, the end result is better, cleaner, healthier wines.



Innovation

Shaping the future



The winner of the prestigious Maurice O'Shea Award in 2012 was not a person or even an organisation; it was an idea – the Australian Screwcap Initiative.

The successful development of the screwcap concept throughout the first decade of the 21st century is now recognised around the world as the most significant recent advancement in guaranteeing the quality and consistency of premium wine. It happened thanks to a group of visionaries in South Australia's Clare Valley, led by Jeffrey Grosset.

Thirteen wineries released their showcase Rieslings under screwcap in 2000, highlighting the ability of the new closure to protect the integrity of the very best wines. Other wineries and regions followed, and today wines of the quality of Penfolds Bin 707, Petaluma Coonawarra and Wolf Blass Platinum Label Shiraz are all released only under screwcap.

The success of this initiative highlights the innovative spirit of the industry in South Australia.

From pioneering advancements in vineyard canopy management to experimenting with new wine winemaking techniques or developing Bev-Scan, a spectral instrument that can analyse wine directly through a bottle, things are constantly evolving.

The success of this initiative highlights the innovative spirit of the industry in South Australia.

Bev-Scan is one of the smart technologies being developed at the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI). Others include the WineCloud, a web-based application for storing and analysing wine data, and developments in spectral fingerprinting, a technique to capture the chemical nature of a wine in an objective and robust manner.

The AWRI is part of a unique Wine Industry Cluster that also includes the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), the national science body the CSIRO, the University of Adelaide's Wine Science Group and the Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Wine Production.

The organisations are co-located in Adelaide's Waite Precinct, and their combined research expertise ranges from grapevine biochemistry and sensory science to consumer analysis and the link between wine and health. This is complemented by the wine business research capability concentrated in the innovative University of Adelaide Wine Future group and the consumer research expertise of University of South Australia's School of Marketing.

Not surprisingly, remaining Phylloxera free is high on the South Australian agenda and the State Government, through SARDI, is supporting major

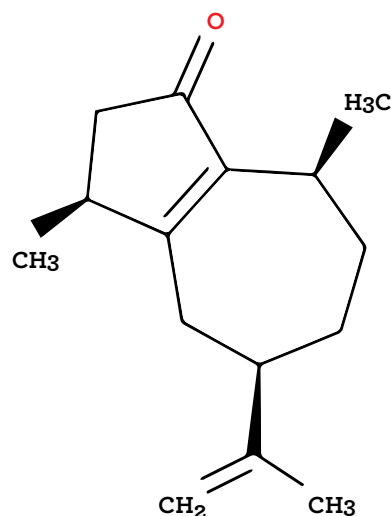
research to develop a DNA soil testing procedure suitable for grapevines and other crops. Initial results are encouraging, and are attracting international interest.

So, too, did two important innovations at opposite ends of the wine production process.

In 2010, the University of Adelaide unveiled unique carbon dating techniques that can identify the age of even vintage wine to within a year. This has been hailed as a significant new tool in the fight against the escalating problem of wine fraud, where cheap wines are sold under fake labels and often passed off as prestige brands.

A year later, scientists at the AWRI were the first in the world to sequence the *Brettanomyces* genome, a breakthrough that allows winemakers to manage the yeast organism known as brett, which can spoil wine with medicinal or metallic characters.

The AWRI has also added some unique firepower to its Board. Its newest Director is Professor Brian Schmidt, a keen winemaker better known for winning the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics.



In 2007, the AWRI had a critical role in the discovery of the compound rotundone, which it established as the principal compound responsible for the peppery character often recognised in Australian Shiraz.

Experiences

Welcoming visitors with wine and more

You won't find ChocoVino on any wine lists, but it has become a popular wine experience for visitors to the Adelaide Hills, and been applauded by the likes of Gourmet Traveller Wine magazine and the US television network CNN.

Hahndorf Hills Winery matches its boutique wines to a selection of the world's best chocolates, a concept that explores wine's potential in exciting new ways – and quickly turns doubters into devotees.

Just a short drive away, Sinclair's Gully is as well known for its bird life and views across the Morialta Conservation Park as it is its quality wines, while The Lane Vineyard hosts one of the best winery restaurants in the country.

That's the way we do it in South Australia. We firmly believe that wine is a part of life, and we offer a diverse range of opportunities to taste it and talk about it, while also enjoying great food, great scenery and a range of other tourist attractions. Many wineries operate from heritage buildings that date back to the earliest days of European settlement.

Our 18 wine regions are found in some of the most picturesque parts of South Australia, from the southern Flinders Ranges (where the great Australian Outback begins) and the banks of the mighty Murray River to picturesque Kangaroo Island (KI to the locals), where you can combine wine tasting with whale and seal watching.

In McLaren Vale you can even have a go at creating your own wine at d'Arenberg's "blending bench". You'll be given a selection of wines, each with distinctive flavours and textures, and helped to do what the great winemakers do – blend them to get just the right balance. When you're happy with the result, you'll bottle it, create a name and a label, and take it home.

In the Barossa, the Jacob's Creek Visitors Centre lets you immerse yourself in the art and science of

winemaking – and does it so well that it is now part of South Australian Tourism's Hall of Fame – while nearby Seppeltsfield has been described as a national treasure. Here you can explore heritage buildings, try a vintage tawny made in the year of your birth, or watch artists at work in the prestigious Jam Factory studios.

You can combine wine tasting in the Riverland with the unique experience of exploring the Banrock Station Wetlands, or spend a few days cycling or walking the Clare Valley's 33-kilometre Riesling Trail through rolling countryside as you visit a variety of cellar doors and other tourist attractions. The oldest winery in the region, Sevenhill Cellars, was established by Jesuit priests who first planted the vines to make sacramental wine.

The Clare Valley also pioneered the concept of the annual gourmet weekend – combining wine, fine food, music and fun at cellar doors across the region – and 30 years on it is still one of the best. All of our major wine regions have a similar event each year, each with its own regional style.



You can even have a unique tasting experience without leaving Adelaide's CBD. The National Wine Centre has installed the largest wine-dispensing bank in Australia, allowing you to buy a taste of whatever takes your fancy.

As many as 120 wines are available at any one time – including Penfold's Grange – and there are three tasting sizes. Once again innovation is the key. Once a bottle is opened, the machine pumps in a small shot of argon gas, preventing oxidation and preserving the wine for up to three weeks.

In South Australia, a glass of great wine is never far away.



Barossa Zone / Mt Lofty Ranges Zone

Barossa Valley / Eden Valley / Clare Valley / Adelaide Hills / Adelaide Plains

South Australia's pre-eminent place in the world of wine is at its most concentrated and conspicuous in a scenic 175-kilometre arc that runs north from the edge of Adelaide's CBD.

Here you will find the iconic Barossa Valley, its impressive little brother, the Eden Valley, and the picturesque Clare Valley and Adelaide Hills – the latter rapidly emerging as one of the most important cool-climate regions in Australia. You could drive from one end to the other in less than three hours, or spend a week exploring your choice of more than 100 cellar doors.

Technically these regions cover two separate wine zones, but the variety of soils and climatic conditions thrown up by this mix of hills, valleys and sub-valleys defies boundaries. The Clare Valley, for example, has more in common with the Barossa than with the Adelaide Hills region at the other end of the Mt Lofty Ranges – but actually is very different to both.

The Barossa's German heritage is well documented and obvious to even a casual visitor, but there is English blood in its parentage as well. The likes of Samuel Smith and Walter Saltram made their mark alongside German pioneers Johann Gramp and Joseph Seppelt, leaving a remarkable legacy.

The modern Barossa has wineries run by the fifth and sixth generations of the families that founded them, with vineyard blocks up to 150 years old.

The neighbouring Eden Valley kept a low profile until two events marked its emergence as a significant region in its own right – the establishment of the Henschke vineyards and the decision by companies such as Yalumba to move their premium Riesling vineyards from the Barossa to its cooler slopes.

Today Eden Valley rivals the Clare Valley as Australia's premier region for elegant and sophisticated Riesling.

Clare's wines are matched by its natural beauty, which moved one winemaker to suggest there are only two kinds of people in the world – those who are from Clare and those who wish they were. This is one of Australia's best regions for a scenic wine tour.

The Adelaide Hills has similar claims to fame, and is just 20 minutes from the centre of Adelaide. Both of these regions have long histories of achievement but have really come into their own over the past 50 years, with the opening of exciting new wineries determined to make the most of prime wine country.

There's a fifth region to complete the picture, and it is geographically the odd one out, with neither a hill nor a valley to be seen. The Adelaide Plains are flat and often very warm, but there's good wine to be found there, much of it made by generations of Italian migrants.

Point of Difference

This is where South Australia's wine industry was born. Vineyards were planted in the Barossa, Clare and the Adelaide Hills within five years of European settlers arriving in South Australia, and the Eden Valley was not far behind.

The common theme, from hill to valley to plain, is just how good these regions are, and how important the wine industry is to them. Here is where South Australia truly embraces wine and there is a genuine camaraderie behind the winemaking excellence.

Top Wines

The Langton's Classification is the definitive guide to Australia's prestige wines. In its 2014 edition, the following wines from the Barossa and Mt Lofty Hills Zones were rated among the best of the best.

Exceptional – Barossa Zone

Chris Ringland:

Dry Grown Barossa Ranges Shiraz

Henschke: *Hill of Grace Shiraz*

Henschke: *Mount Edelstone Shiraz*

Rockford: *Basket Press Shiraz*

Torbreck: *RunRig Shiraz*

Seppeltsfield:

100 Year Old Para Vintage Tawny

Exceptional – Mt Lofty Hills Zone

Grosset: *Polish Hill Riesling*

Jim Barry: *The Armagh Shiraz*

Wendouree: *Shiraz*

Outstanding – Barossa Zone

Barossa Valley Estate:

E & E Black Pepper Shiraz

Glaetzer Wines: *Amon-Ra*

Grant Burge: *Meshach Shiraz*

Greenock Creek: *Roennfeldt Road Shiraz*

Greenock Creek: *Roennfeldt Road*

Cabernet Sauvignon

Henschke: *Cyril Henschke Cabernet*

Kaesler Wines: *Old Bastard Shiraz*

Penfolds: *RWT Shiraz*

Peter Lehmann: *Stonewell Shiraz*

Rockford: *Black (Sparkling) Shiraz*

Yalumba: *The Octavius Old Vine Shiraz*

Outstanding – Mt Lofty Hills Zone

Grosset: *Springvale Riesling*

Wendouree: *Cabernet Sauvignon*

Wendouree: *Cabernet Malbec*

Wendouree: *Shiraz Malbec*

Wendouree: *Shiraz Mataro*



Talking Points

- The Barossa Valley's winemakers have created a formal Old Vine Charter to classify, protect and promote the region's most famous and important vines. This is a precursor to creating a comprehensive Old Vine Register.
- The Barossa Valley was originally the "Barroosa" Valley. It was named by Colonel William Light, who designed the city of Adelaide, after the "Hill of Roses" area of Spain where he fought in the Spanish Peninsula War.
- The Jesuits established Sevenhill in the Clare Valley in 1851 to produce sacramental wine. While this tradition continues, Sevenhill is today highly regarded for its premium table wines. Its old stone wine cellars also make it one of Australia's historical treasures.
- Adelaide Hills wineries Tomich Hill and Bird in Hand have opened cellar door outlets in China – in Shanghai and Liaoning province respectively – with local partners.
- In 1878 Benno Seppelt laid down a cask of his very best port at the Seppeltsfield winery in the Barossa. It was released 100 years later, beginning an annual tradition that continues to this day. It is a true vintage wine and unrivalled anywhere in the world, according to James Halliday, for richness and complexity.

The Regions

Barossa Valley

Area: 10,700 hectares
 Altitude: 250-370m
 Production: 68% red, 32% white
 Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon, Chardonnay

The Barossa Valley is Australia's best-known wine region and South Australia's most visited tourist destination. This is classic Australian wine country, with old vines and new capturing the eye alongside grazing land, rocky outcrops, ancient gums and picturesque towns.

The Barossa has been described as an "old New World" region because its success has been built on European cultural traditions of food growing and preservation, mixed farming, music, art, craft and wine. The Barossa Zone was among the first in Australia to define itself based on characteristics such as topography, climate, soil type and land use.

The complex system of valleys and hills creates a wide range of sites and an equal diversity of soils. The climate is conducive to vine growth and a variety of styles – but Shiraz is king. In fact, it could be argued that Barossa Shiraz is Australia's most important single varietal style. It is invariably lush, velvety and mouth-filling.

Figures alone do not tell the story of a premium wine region, but it is hard to ignore the fact that James Halliday rated 66 Barossa Valley wineries as "5 star" – more than in any other Australian region – and nearly one in five of the wines rates as exceptional or outstanding in the latest Langton's Classification are from the Barossa.

Eden Valley

Area: 2270 hectares
 Altitude: 380-550m
 Production: 55% red, 45% white
 Principal varieties: Shiraz, Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay

The Eden Valley's history parallels that of the Barossa Valley and many of the Barossa's leading wineries source fruit from the region. But it is the small boutique wineries exploring the potential of the unique terroir that have underpinned its reputation for quality.

Defined by the cool climate and later ripening, Eden Valley wines are distinctive, displaying aromatics, elegance, complexity and finesse. Shiraz and Riesling are the signature varieties, but Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay of great character also are produced. The Mountadam winery established South Australia's first commercial planting of Chardonnay in 1973.

The Shiraz differs from that of the Barossa, with the cooler climate granting the fruit full flavour but with less sugar and greater softness. Rieslings have a pristine quality reflected in their minerality, citrus fruit and spiciness, holding great finesse particularly as they age.

Clare Valley

Area: 4540 hectares
 Altitude: 400-500m
 Production: 65% red, 35% white
 Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, Chardonnay

With its rolling hills, meandering streams and lines of gum trees twisting through vineyards and around old stone houses, the Clare Valley is one of Australia's most beautiful wine regions. Many wineries are dotted along the Riesling Trail, a 27-kilometre bicycle path that follows the route of an old railway line.



While barely 35 kilometres long and as little as five wide, the region is divided into five distinct sub-regions, each reflecting the different interweaving valleys and creek-beds, and thus the differences in soil, altitude and climate. Although summers can be hot, altitude creates cooling afternoon breezes that play a major role in slowing down the ripening process. The resulting wines are rich yet austere, delicate yet robust.

Some of Australia's finest Riesling is grown in the Clare Valley, alongside equally impressive Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz.

Adelaide Hills

Area: 3430 hectares

Altitude: 400-500m

Production: 45% red, 55% white

Principal varieties: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz

The Adelaide Hills is one of Australia's most vibrant cool-climate regions and one of the most diverse in terms of soil and topography. It receives more rainfall than any other wine region in South Australia, and it is whites not reds that dominate.

While the region is large in overall area, the hills create a wide range of meso-climates and the vineyards tend to be small in area and often steep, making hand pruning and picking a necessity for many growers. This diversity plays host to a range of grape varieties and wine styles.

In the coolest areas, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir produce exemplary sparkling and table wines, while Sauvignon Blanc (among the best in Australia), Riesling

and Pinot Gris enter into the picture as the temperature rises. Shiraz was traditionally the dominant red variety (often blended with Viognier), but the region is beginning to make its mark with Pinot Noir.

Adelaide Plains

Area: 590 hectares

Altitude: 20m

Production: 75% red, 25% white

Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Chardonnay

The Adelaide Plains region is situated 30 kilometres north of Adelaide among market gardens and rose farms. The soils are excellent and support high yields, but the climate is hot and arid, with an annual rainfall among the lowest of any Australian wine region.

Most production is processed in the Barossa Valley, with the exception of a number of small producers who have shown just what can be achieved with the fruit of the region, much of which is sent elsewhere to enhance other brands. The grapes for the original Penfolds Grange were grown in the Adelaide Plains in the 1950s.

The region was established largely by Italians migrants after World War II, and this is reflected in the wine styles and approach to winemaking. Primo Estate made its name here, before also expanding to McLaren Vale.

Wineries to Watch

Barossa Valley

- Charles Melton
- Grant Burge
- Hentley Farm
- Penfolds
- Peter Lehmann
- Rockford
- Seppeltsfield
- Torbreck Vintners
- Turkey Flat
- Wolf Blass

Eden Valley

- Heggies Vineyard
- Henschke
- Pewsey Vale
- Yalumba

Clare Valley

- Grosset
- Jim Barry Wines
- Kilikanoon
- O'Leary Walker Wines
- Pikes
- Sevenhill Cellars
- Tim Adams
- Wendouree

Adelaide Hills

- Ashton Hills
- Bird in Hand
- Geoff Weaver
- Nepenthe Vineyards
- Petaluma
- Shaw & Smith

Fleurieu Zone

McLaren Vale / Langhorne Creek / Currency Creek / Southern Fleurieu / Kangaroo Island

An eminent viticulturist was once moved to suggest that in climatic terms the region just south of Adelaide known as the lower Fleurieu Peninsula has “arguably the best conditions in all of mainland South Australia for table wine production”.

That’s a good discussion to be had over a good glass of red, but it does help explain the enormous success of the broader Fleurieu Zone in crafting premium wine. The maritime influence cannot be ignored.

The Fleurieu owes its long wine history not to the German settlers who made their mark in the Barossa Valley and the Adelaide Hills, but to an equally pioneering group of Englishmen led, in particular, by John Reynell, Dr A.C. Kelly and Thomas Hardy.

Reynell laid the foundations for Chateau Reynella winery in 1838, just two years after the arrival of European settlers, while barely five years later Kelly (the 12th man listed in South Australia’s medical register) began the long association with McLaren Vale that included the founding of the famous Tintara winery.

Hardy subsequently bought Tintara, and his company, Thomas Hardy, became the largest of those behind a massive expansion of the area’s production of red and fortified wines in the late 19th century.

McLaren Vale did not go it alone. In 1850, one Frank Potts bought 130 hectares of fertile land in the area we now know as Langhorne Creek and launched the dynasty that still runs the iconic Bleasdale winery. Langhorne Creek is the only one of the five regions within the Fleurieu Zone that does not touch the coast, but the dominating presence of Lake Alexandrina has a similar impact on its vines.

The Southern Fleurieu region (which is almost completely surrounded by the waters of the Southern Ocean) also began producing wine in the late 19th century, while Currency Creek and Kangaroo Island came later, but with great vigour.

There are many different soil types across the zone and also significant changes in altitude, as a largely coastal region merges with the Adelaide Hills.

This is very much red wine country, with Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon the top varieties in all five regions and whites accounting for only 20-25% of production. But the whites have great quality. James Halliday has even noted that the cooler sites in McLaren Vale are “among Australia’s better areas for Sauvignon Blanc”.

McLaren Vale boomed during the 1970s, and while the established companies continued to make their mark, Halliday notes that the region “quickly became the spiritual home of the small winery in Australia”. Craftsmanship and innovation are the hallmark.

Point of Difference

The Fleurieu is all about water. Vast expanses of sea and lake provide a significant cooling influence in an otherwise warm zone (the very definition of a maritime climate) but rainfall is low in most regions, making irrigation essential for young vines. Site selection and site/variety marriage are important.

Generally the climate is similar across all five regions, but the combined impact of the sea on one side and the Mt Lofty Ranges on the other means that within individual regions, most particularly McLaren Vale, there are diverse micro-climates that provide for distinct varietal differences.

Top Wines

The Langton’s Classification is the definitive guide to Australia’s prestige wines. In its 2014 edition, the following Fleurieu Zone wines were rated among the best of the best.

Exceptional

Clarendon Hills: *Astralis Syrah*

Outstanding

d’Arenberg: *The Dead Arm Shiraz*

Kay Brothers Amery Vineyards:
Block 6 Old Vine Shiraz

Noon Winery: *Reserve Cabernet*

Noon Winery: *Reserve Shiraz*



Talking Points

- McLaren Vale is one of the most geologically diverse wine regions in the world and its innovative Scarce Earth project gives wine lovers at all levels the opportunity to explore the relative influence of geology, soil, climate and topography on wine. Each year winemakers are encouraged to create a Shiraz made from a single vineyard bloc with a unique flavour profile and personality.
- McLaren Vale has a strong emphasis on the environment and sustainability. Many local growers have embraced alternative farming practices and improve traditional approaches, and invested in reclaimed water for irrigation.



- Frank Potts was a pioneer in more ways than one. Arriving in South Australia in the very year it was founded, he planted the first vineyard in what is now Langhorne Creek, adapted it to take advantage of the natural seasonal flooding of the Bremer river, and founded what was for many years the only functioning winery in the region. Five generations later, the family-owned Bleasdale remains one of the region's standouts.
- Bert Salomon, the first importer of Australian wine into Austria, was so taken with South Australia that he now moves his family there for the first few months of each year while he oversees the production of wines for Salomon Estates winery in Currency Creek. Vintage over, he returns to the northern hemisphere to oversee his family winery.
- Kangaroo Island's showpiece is The Islander Estate Vineyards founded by high-profile Bordeaux winemaker Jacques Lurton, who saw something special in the local "terroir". The principal varieties are Sangiovese, Shiraz and Cabernet Franc, and the wines are made and bottled on-site in true estate style.

The Regions

McLaren Vale

Area: 6650 hectares
Altitude: 50-200m
Production: 80% red, 20% white
Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Grenache

McLaren Vale is one of South Australia's most prestigious and most picturesque regions. The unique marriage of a wine region and beach lifestyle has created a melting pot for all things culinary, vinous and artistic.

It also is widely recognised as one of Australia's greenest wine regions because of its efficient water use strategies and commitment to sustainability.

There is substantial climatic variation across the region, depending on the degree of exposure to the cooling influence of the nearby ocean, and site selection and the matching of site to variety are all-important. A range of micro-climates provides for exciting varietal differences.

Shiraz that can only be described as elegant is McLaren Vale's traditional strength, but premium Grenache is attracting considerable attention. Older vines produce wines of great richness.

Langhorne Creek

Area: 5070 hectares
Altitude: 30m
Production: 85% red, 15% white
Principal varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Chardonnay, Merlot

Many good judges consider Langhorne Creek to be the best-kept secret of Australian wine, and for good reason. A quiet achiever with a focus on quality, it has been the power behind many of our most successful wines, including three successive Jimmy Watson Trophy wins for Wolf Blass.

Nestled among gum trees on the Bremer and Angas rivers, the region's fertile soils are predominantly deep, alluvial sandy loams that vary in colour from red-brown to dark grey, with patches of black, self-mulching clays. All soil types promote vine vigour, generous canopies and cropping levels.

Orlando Wyndham made a major investment in vineyards in Langhorne Creek in the 1990s and there are now more than 30 small wineries in the region. Big reds dominate, but Verdelho is a regional specialty.

Currency Creek

Area: 425 hectares

Altitude: 50-70m

Production: 85% red, 15% white

Principal varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc

An emerging wine region, Currency Creek is physically close to McLaren Vale and equally influenced by a coastal location, but that is where the comparisons end.

The climate is slightly cooler and the region's two standout varieties are distinctly different from those of its near neighbour. The Cabernet Sauvignons have more in common with those from the Coonawarra, while the Shiraz has a Rhone Valley-like spicy fruit.

Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon also do well, the latter displaying an intensity and delicacy reminiscent of the Hunter Valley.

Soil and topography are central to Currency Creek's success. Dominant rolling sandy slopes over clay allow ground water to collect and be easily accessed by vine roots.

Southern Fleurieu

Area: 440 hectares

Altitude: 250m

Production: 75% red, 25% white

Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon, Chardonnay

Vineyards and wineries are but one of many tourist attractions in a region that includes the major beach resort of Victor Harbor. The undulating slopes and gentle hills pose no limitations to viticulture and enhance the beauty of the vineyards within a diverse landscape.

Southern Fleurieu is perhaps the most distinct of the five regions in the zone, with a pronounced maritime influence. The climate is cooler than many people expect, and this is reflected in the wines.

As with the rest of the zone, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon dominate, but those in the know foresee an increased investment in Merlot, so well is it suited to the conditions.



Kangaroo Island

Area: 80 hectares

Altitude: 30-180m

Production: 80% red, 20% white

Principal varieties: Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot

The third largest island off the Australian coast, beautiful KI (as locals know it) is a mix of beaches, forests, desert dunes and farmland. More than half the island is national park and this pristine environment free of mainland pests hosts so much native fauna is a true outdoor zoo.

Viticulture began in the 1980s and today wine makes an important contribution to KI's reputation for high-quality natural produce, including honey, dairy products and seafood. The climate is temperate and devoid of extremes, while the soils are similar to those of Padthaway in the Limestone Coast Zone.

The longest established style is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, but Shiraz is now the dominant grape variety, producing wines that are full flavoured but restrained.

Wineries to Watch

McLaren Vale

- Chalk Hill
- Chapel Hill
- Clarendon Hills
- Coriole
- D'Arenberg
- Fox Creek Wines
- Gemtree Vineyards
- Geoff Merrill Wines
- Kay Brothers Amery Vineyards
- Wirra Wirra

Langhorne Creek

- Angas Plains Estate
- Bleasdale Vineyards
- Bremerton Wines
- Lake Breeze Wines

Currency Creek

- Angus Wines
- ShowBlock Estate

Southern Fleurieu

- Minko Wines

Kangaroo Island

- The Islander Estate Vineyards

Limestone Coast Zone

Coonawarra / Padthaway / Wrattenbully / Mt Benson / Robe / Mt Gambier



“Whatever yardstick one adopts, Coonawarra produces most of Australia’s great Cabernet Sauvignon.” So says James Halliday, and few good judges would disagree with him.

Yet it nearly wasn’t so. In the early 20th century Coonawarra’s wines were used for little more than distilling into brandy and immediately after World War II authorities encouraged returning soldiers to rip out the few established vineyards so they could make a living from agriculture.

Fortunately, David Wynn had other ideas. Recognising the potential of the unique red “terra rossa” soils, in 1951 he took a gamble and bought the famous stone winery, cellars and original estate vineyards established by Scottish migrant John Riddock six decades earlier. And thus the legend of Wynns Coonawarra Estate was born.

Other visionaries followed, and the Coonawarra became the first cool-climate viticultural region to gain national prominence. Today it is one of six recognised wine regions within the Limestone Coast Zone that begins about 300 kilometres south-east of Adelaide. Each is unique in its own way.

Padthaway (the name means “good water” in the language of the Potawurutj people) was the next region to become established.

Like the Coonawarra, it is a long and thin strip of land and its potential was not fully recognised until the 1940s. Only when Australia’s national science organisation, the CSIRO, suggested Padthaway’s rich soil, underground water, Mediterranean climate and coastal influences were ideal for horticulture did wine companies sit up and take notice.

Seppelt established the first vineyards in 1964, quickly followed by Lindemans, Hardys, Wynns and others. Today, James Halliday rates the region as “an unambiguously important producer of premium-quality wines”.

Unlike the Coonawarra, however, Padthaway has only patches of terra rossa. It has made its name with grapes grown in predominantly red-brown, loamy sand soils that have more in common with regions such as the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale.

The Limestone Coast’s four other regions – Wrattenbully, Mt Benson, Robe and Mt Gambier – are all relatively new, with vineyards and boutique wineries sharing the landscape with a range of other agriculture.

Mt Benson and Robe both hug the coast (the township of Robe is one of South Australia’s premier holiday destinations) and the maritime influence is pronounced. Wrattenbully shares neighbouring Coonawarra’s red soils

but is deceptively warmer, while Mount Gambier is the state’s youngest and coolest region, with great potential for Pinot Noir and sparkling.

The Limestone Coast is now the second largest grower of grapes in South Australia after the Riverland region, and one of the most important in terms of the value of production.

Point of Difference

The Limestone Coast is distinctive in South Australia for a volcanic history that created its topography and unique soils and for a constant supply of the purest underground water.

Beneath the soil – sometimes up to a metre down but in other places just below the surface – lies a layer of calcareous limestone that has significant water retention properties. It is estimated that 60% of the underground water table replenishes itself through local rainfall.

This resource is cherished by local grape growers, who manage it with a close eye on scientific measures of soil moisture.

Top Wines

The Langton’s Classification is the definitive guide to Australia’s prestige wines. In its 2014 edition, the following Limestone Coast wines were rated among the best of the best.

Exceptional

Wynns Coonawarra Estate:
John Riddock Cabernet Sauvignon

Outstanding

Balnaves of Coonawarra:
The Tally Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Katnook Estate:
Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon

Majella: *The Mallea Cabernet Shiraz*

Wynns Coonawarra Estate: *Michael Shiraz*

Talking Points

- Wynns Coonawarra Estate is clearly in very good hands. Three years after *Gourmet Traveller Wine* magazine named chief winemaker Sue Hodder and vineyard manager Allen Jenkins as joint winners of its Winemaker of the Year Award, the Australian Wine Society selected Luke Skeer as its Young Winemaker of the Year for 2013.
- Tapanappa is one of the most interesting recent wine ventures anywhere in Australia. A successful Wrattenbully vineyard has been totally reworked by an exciting partnership of Australian wine leader Brian Croser, Jean-Michel Cazes of Chateau Lynch-Bages in Pauillac and Societe Jacques Bollinger, the parent company of Champagne Bollinger.
- Padthaway's showpiece is Padthaway Estate, which makes wine inside a renovated 1880s woolshed and offers luxury accommodation in a magnificent two-storey Victorian era homestead. The winery specialises in sparkling wine, and houses the only custom-made Champagne basket press in Australia.
- Europeans have shown great interest in the potential of Mt Benson. The famous Rhone Valley firm of M Chapoutier & Co headed a joint venture to establish a 38-hectare biodynamic vineyard, while Norfolk Rise Vineyard – the largest in the region – is owned by Belgian company G & C Kreglinger.

- Cape Jaffa Wines in Mt Benson applied the techniques of German philosopher Rudolf Steiner to establish the Limestone Coast's first biodynamic vineyard in 2003. A decade later winemaker Anna Hooper was named 2013 South Australian Rural Woman of the Year for her vision to help the wine industry become a world environmental leader.
- Nangwarry Station winery in the Mt Gambier region includes large tracts of wetlands and conservation areas.

The Regions

Coonawarra

Area: 5720 hectares
Altitude: 60m
Production: 90% red, 10% white
Principal varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Chardonnay

Coonawarra, the Limestone Coast's largest and most prestigious region, is home to the zone's oldest recorded vineyards (three hectares of Shiraz planted in the 1890s) and to the most celebrated vineyard soil in Australia.

Shiraz is still important – due in no small measure to the achievements of Wynns Coonawarra Estate – but Cabernet Sauvignon really defines the region. The flavours range from cherry to blackcurrant, with an underlying theme of quality and elegance. Tannins are dominant but never dominate. These are some of the best Cabernet Sauvignon wines in the world.

Merlot is on the rise, often for careful blending with Cabernet or Shiraz, and the whites should not be ignored. Modern Chardonnays and fragrant Rieslings are worthy of attention.

Padthaway

Area: 4700 hectares
Altitude: 50m
Production: 60% red, 40% white
Principal varieties: Shiraz, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling

Padthaway is a little hillier than the Coonawarra and the weather somewhat warmer, but otherwise the climate patterns are similar.

It has traditionally been a red wine region, but today Chardonnay ranks second to Shiraz (and ahead of Cabernet Sauvignon) and Riesling is increasingly to the fore. The two major red varieties are made both as varietals and as blends, often with Merlot. Pockets of Viognier, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir also can be found.

Stonehaven is Padthaway's biggest winery and Padthaway Estate its tourist drawcard, but much of its growth as a producer of high-quality wines has come from the investment of smaller grower / winemakers, many with family ties to the region.





Wrattonbully

Area: 2300 hectares

Altitude: 75-150m

Production: 80% red, 20% white

Principal varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Chardonnay

Wrattonbully sits inland between Coonawarra and Padthaway but at higher altitude, and there is a surprising climate variation across the region.

This is red wine territory, with vineyards planted almost exclusively on the Coonawarra-style terra rossa soils, and dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon. The Merlots are worthy of attention as well, however. James Halliday notes that they have “consistently asserted individual character and quality”.

Mt Benson

Area: 230 hectares

Altitude: 50-150m

Production: 75% red, 25% white

Principal varieties: Shiraz, Chardonnay, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc

Mt Benson shares the Coonawarra’s terra rossa soils, but there the comparisons end. Indeed, with its natural bushland setting between rugged coast and inland lakes, this region at first does not look like a wine region. The maritime influence is pronounced.

It is Shiraz that dominates here, and what Cabernet Sauvignon there is tends more to the Bordeaux than the Coonawarra style. Chardonnays are slightly finer and the Sauvignon Blancs more herbaceous than those of Padthaway or the Coonawarra.

Robe

Robe is a newcomer as a formal wine region. Around 90% of the current vineyard area of 710 hectares was planted between 1995 and 2000, including 230 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon, 165 hectares of Shiraz and 110 hectares of Chardonnay. More recent expansion has included Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc.

Robe was once the third largest port in South Australia and a major landing point for Chinese immigrants heading to the Victorian goldfields at the end of the 19th century.

Mt Gambier

Though Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vineyards were planted in the 1980s, followed by a steady expansion and inclusion of other varieties such as Cabernet and Merlot in the 1990s, Mt Gambier was not declared a formal region until 2010. More than 60% of its current vineyard area of 200 hectares was planted between 2001 and 2010.

The city of Mt Gambier is South Australia’s second largest after Adelaide.

Wineries to Watch

Coonawarra

- Balnaves of Coonawarra
- Brand’s of Coonawarra
- Katnook Estate
- Leconfield
- Majella
- Penley Estate
- Wynns Coonawarra Estate
- Zema Estate

Padthaway

- Browns of Padthaway
- Henry’s Drive
- Padthaway Estate
- Stonehaven

Wrattonbully

- Russet Ridge
- Stone Coast
- Tapanappa
- Terre a Terre

Mt Benson

- Cape Jaffa Wines
- Norfolk Rise Vineyard
- Ralph Fowler Wines

Robe

- Frog Island

Mt Gambier

- Koonara Vineyard

While you’re there

There are 20 sites of international or national significance on the Limestone Coast, including Mount Gambier’s Blue Lake, which fills the crater of a dormant volcano.

The Pool of Siloam at Beachport is seven times saltier than the sea, while the megafauna fossils in the World Heritage Listed Naracoorte Caves are around half a million years old.

The picturesque towns of Robe, Penola and Padthaway feature classic buildings from South Australia’s pioneering past.

Lower Murray Zone / Far North Zone

Riverland / Southern Flinders Ranges

South Australia's largest and smallest wine regions by volume have in common a link to the great outdoors.

The Riverland follows the twists and turns of Australia's longest river, the Murray, as it heads towards the sea south of Adelaide. Here you will find panoramic backdrops of limestone cliffs and some of Australia's most distinctive wildlife. Bird watching is popular, as are camping and a range of water sports.

The Murray is a major water source, feeding not just vineyards but also citrus and stone fruits, nuts, vegetables and field crops.

The Southern Flinders Ranges, by contrast, is pretty much lacking in water, if you discount the section that joins the coast. This is the start of the great Australian Outback.

The unique natural history of the Flinders Ranges is a magnet for tourists, with attractions such as Mount Remarkable and Alligator Gorge situated within the boundaries of the wine region. Not far north are Wilpena Pound, Oodnadatta and the road to Alice Springs.

Both regions have established a niche in South Australia's wine industry that should not be underestimated. Other winemakers certainly rate highly the quality of their best wines.

Wine amid the wetlands

Banrock Station is one of the Riverland's great attractions and great stories. The then BRL Hardy company bought an 1800-hectare farm in 1994 and created a cellar door, a restaurant and a brand new wine label dedicated to environmental sustainability.

The property has 12.5 kilometres of river frontage and boasted extensive wetland areas, which were restored, reinvigorated and made accessible to visitors through the construction of boardwalks and interpretive signs. It is a beautiful setting, with abundant birdlife.

Part proceeds from wine sales initially were donated to Landcare Australia. Banrock Station's sponsorship program now includes a range of national and international projects, from returning salmon to rivers in Canada to saving bees in the UK.

The Regions

The Riverland

Area: 20,260 hectares

Altitude: 70m

Production: 60% red, 40% white

Principal varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Muscat Gordo Blanco, Grenache

The Riverland provides the fruit for half of South Australia's total wine production and around a quarter of Australia's. Much of it is blended, creating full-flavoured, generous and approachable wines under a variety of well-known brands.

Alongside the big industry names, however, is a growing band of small winemakers who are trying new and interesting things that make the most of the region's Mediterranean climate.

The driving force is the Riverland Alternative Wine Group, which is exploring the potential of European wine styles that are less well known in Australia, including Vermentino, Nero d'Avola, Fiano and Montepulciano. The early results have been impressive.

Petit Verdot and Viognier – both varieties that enjoy warm regions that entice the full body and flavours from their berries – are also in demand, alongside Mourvèdre and Grenache.

The traditional Shiraz and Chardonnay can be found as well, of course. The secret, in this warm sunny region, is to limit the yield to maximise potential, a technique perfected by the region's premier wine company Angove's.

As on the Adelaide Plains, post-war migrants from Italy and Greece were the driving force behind the region's development. Significant areas of vines are more than 80 years old.



Southern Flinders Ranges

The Southern Flinders Ranges is a natural extension of the Clare Valley, with which it shares many geological factors, and has slowly emerged as a wine region over the past 30 years.

Not surprisingly, given its proximity to the Outback, it's a warm part of the State, with most vineyards requiring irrigation from underground sources, but the soil is fertile and well suited to viticulture. Elevation ranges from 20 metres to more than 700 metres, with most of the 180 hectares of vineyards planted on the slopes of the ranges at 350-550 metres

It is overwhelmingly a red wine area, with Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot all of good quality, and a number of Barossa Valley wineries use grapes from the region for blending or the specific production of Southern Flinders Ranges wines.

Wineries to Watch

Riverland

- Angove's
- Banrock Station
- Kingston Estate
- 919 Wines

Southern Flinders Ranges

- Bundaleer Wines

Fleurieu



Barossa & Mt Lofty Ranges



Limestone Coast



Lower Murray & Far North

